

**Culture and Communication LOYC 340/2**  
Loyola College for Diversity and Sustainability, Concordia University  
Instructor: Philip Szporer  
Room: CC-425  
Tuesday-Thursday 10:15-11:30 a.m.  
**Office Hours: by appointment** (location: AD 505)  
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### **Objectives**

Transformations can come about in a sustained manner as a result of cultural, political, social and economic engagement. The course approaches the relationship of culture and communication by examining what it means to be an engaged citizen. Students explore cultural strategies in a global world with a view to expanding awareness of the role of imagination and creativity in expression and interpretation, and sensitivity to the role of cultural and other differences in the processes of communication. The class will centre on ideas about the body in relation to variations in cultural experience and how visual and performative expression impacts questions of interpretation, aesthetics, and ethical judgment.

### **Course Text(s)**

There is no course text. Readings are posted on the Course Reserves list - <http://clues.concordia.ca/search/r> (then navigate to the selections listed under "LOYC 340"). Over the duration of the term, selections may be added or deleted from this list.

### **Course Requirements**

Participation is essential. Throughout the course, students will be challenged to articulate their own critical analysis through active discussion and written assignments, as well as a group oral presentation. In every class, students will be responding to readings and video excerpts. Students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the readings. Written assignments are based upon individual research work and reflection.

### **Details about the assignments**

#### **• Moodle entries**

Prior to every Tuesday class, students will enter one reaction (about one paragraph) on the course Moodle site, based on one of the readings for that week. React critically to the readings. The substance of the entry will, more than likely, focus in on one particular issue. The process of writing in this manner helps students process the material, and ensures a preparedness for the class discussion.

#### **• Response essays**

Each response essay (500 words maximum) is designed to focus attention on critical issues based on course readings and class discussions, and to provide a vehicle for clarifying your thoughts. It may be written as a series of comments, meditations or personal reflections on the readings. Typed, doubled-spaced (reasonable font size). No bibliography or footnotes required, unless warranted. Due: September 29, October 11.

#### **• Group Oral Presentation Guidelines**

Critically present the work of one artist/group, exhibition, or performance. Please indicate what the artist is expressing (for or against), and convey the significance of your subject's intellectual and creative contributions efficiently and effectively to the

substance of the presentations. The goal is to spark sustained dialogue among students. (Number of students per group TBD)

\*Representative(s) from each group are required to briefly meet with the instructor during week 6 (October 11, 13) to identify project topics. Parameters for the projects will be discussed in class during week 1-2. A written project proposal of one to two paragraphs will be turned in week 7 (October 18).

Group work is an important part of university education, and the nature of the work world today increasingly requires individuals to have problem-solving and team-building skills, by considering subjects together as opposed to on our own.

In this assignment, every member of the group must participate, whether in the actual presentation or in its preparation. Please keep in mind two principles: You are here i) to learn, and ii) be respectful of other points of view.

For the presentation, think about how you are going to divide the time allocated for your group. (Hint: Don't spend ten minutes on your introduction!)

Consider the format of your presentation. Do you want to project illustrations? How can brief audio or video clips make important points?

In consultation with the instructor, prepare a **twenty-minute (20) presentation** on an agreed topic. Speak either from notes or from a fully articulated text but either way please bear in mind the time limit and be as succinct as possible in your handling of your material. More detail (e.g. quotations from set texts or from critics, dates, etc.) can, if desired, be included in a handout or in the ensuing discussion.

At the end of the presentation, prepare yourself for likely questions and discussion.

### **Checklist**

- The better the presentation and discussion, the better the learning outcome for all.
- Be imaginative. Where possible use visual aids, projections, slides, handouts, and performance, again bearing in mind the constraints of time and ensuring that your material is directly relevant, illuminating, well-illustrated, and not merely decorative. The main points of your argument should be clearly expressed, and the structure of your presentation coherent and logical.
- When grading, I will consider both the quality of content and the effective presentation.
- Group oral presentations must be conducted in English.

### **• Research paper**

Students will complete a research paper examining the social, cultural, political and the aesthetic shift realized through an artist's and/or a group's efforts, or conversely how socio-political, economic and cultural forces impacts their work.

A written project proposal of one to two paragraphs must be turned in week 9 (Nov. 1), at the latest. The final 8-page paper (approx. 2000 words) will be handed in at the beginning of the second-to-last last class (Nov. 29).

Papers must be original, in that they will be written specifically for this course, clearly organized, and should articulate a coherent theme or argument and use appropriate evidence to support their case. They must use the appropriate scholarly literature and academic sources, especially journal articles, in the relevant fields. Papers will be correctly and completely referenced, using the Chicago footnoting style. Each of these



factors will be taken into consideration in evaluating the paper.

**Policy for Writing Evaluation:** Students are evaluated on their mastery of language skills. To receive the best grade, you must

- Demonstrate maturity and originality of thought reflected by the ability to analyze, synthesize and evaluate.
- Sustain the development of a point or idea over the length of the assignment.
- Use organized paragraphs and transitional devices.
- Make conventional use of capitalization and punctuation.
- Use consistently the grammar, syntax and spelling of standard English or French, with particular attention to sentence structure and to agreement between subjects, verbs, pronouns and antecedents.

Assignments may be written in French or English. Papers must be typed, double-spaced, with a clear font size, paginated, and include your name, a title, as well as proper citations/references, bibliography, filmography/videography. Grades are based on clarity of expression, observational, descriptive and analytic skills, research methods, references, footnotes and bibliography.

All assignments must be handed in hard copy, and not sent via e-mail. E-mailed assignments will only be accepted in cases of grave illness or circumstance.

#### **Grading Breakdown**

Active participation/Attendance	10%
Moodle entries	15%
Group presentation	20%
Response essays (2)	30% (15% each)
Final paper (due final week)	25%

#### **Attendance/Participation**

Attendance will be recorded at the beginning of every class. No more than two justifiable absences will be allowed. Students will be expected to participate actively in class discussions. If you miss one class, your attendance/participation mark will automatically decrease 5%, two absences 10%. Exceptions: if you have a justified absence or a bona fide documented emergency (for example, illness, injury, hospitalization) Please advise early in the term if you are observing religious holidays. Personal travel is not an acceptable reason.

Students are expected to participate actively in critical class discussions based on readings, lectures, conceptual and image research, and screenings. Here is a rough guide that will help you understand how my assessment of your participation:

- If you attend class every week and say little or nothing: 0-4
- If you attend class every week and speak, but you never do more than regurgitate the course lectures, or voice your personal opinions: 4-7
- If you attend class every week and engage in discussion, listen attentively, and what you have to say is demonstrably informed by the course readings and discussions: 8-10

#### **Lateness policy**

Please note that it is exceedingly disruptive to arrive late to class, and students who do so will be marked as absent. Likewise, students who leave early without reason or who

skip parts of the lecture will be marked as absent. If there are reasonable grounds to be absent for part of the class, please advise me of your situation; it is your responsibility to take the necessary measures to arrive on campus early enough. Should you end up arriving late to the lecture, or if your body demands that you leave the room temporarily, please try to be as discrete as possible in order not to disturb your fellow students. Do this by holding the door gently as it closes rather than letting it bang shut on its own.

Late work is not encouraged. If you have a valid reason for postponing assignment submissions, such as a death in the family or a serious illness, please contact me (or the Department Assistant), and we'll arrange a reasonable alternative. Otherwise, a point will be deducted for each day the paper is late (i.e., 1 point, etc...).

### **Plagiarism**

The most common offense under the Academic Code of Conduct is plagiarism, which the Code defines as **"the presentation of the work of another person as one's own or without proper acknowledgement"** (Article 16<sup>a</sup>).

This could be material copied word for word from books, journals, Internet sites, professor's course notes, etc. It could be material that is paraphrased but closely resembles the original source. It could be the work of a fellow student, for example, an answer on a quiz, data for a lab report, a paper or assignment completed by another student. It might be a paper purchased through one of the many available sources. Plagiarism does not refer to words alone – it can also refer to copying images, graphs, tables, and ideas. "Presentation" is not limited to written work. It also includes oral presentations, computer assignments and artistic works. If you translate the work of another person into French or English and do not cite the source, this is also plagiarism. If you cite your own work without the correct citation, this too is plagiarism.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty and to ensure you avoid committing any offenses by reading the University's Academic Code of Conduct, available at the following sites:

[http://web2.concordia.ca/Legal\\_Counsel/policies/english/AC/Code.html](http://web2.concordia.ca/Legal_Counsel/policies/english/AC/Code.html)

<http://secretariat.concordia.ca/policies/academic/en/AcademicCodeConduct2008.pdf>

### **Other Course Policies**

**Language:** The language of instruction is English. You may submit your written work in French; however, my comments on your papers will normally be in English.

**Electronic Equipment:** Turn off and put away all electronic devices, i.e., mobile phones, iPods, videogames, etc. This class is **not** the place to check Facebook, surf, text-message, or engage in other distracting and disruptive behaviour with electronic devices. Save it for after class. If there is a legitimate reason you must leave your mobile phone on, please notify me in advance, put the phone on vibrate mode, and sit in the front row on the aisle so you can easily depart the class to take your urgent call. Students breaching this policy during the lecture will be penalized on their participation grades, including a possible grade of zero for participation, at the discretion of the course instructor. Please take this warning seriously.

Laptop computers are acceptable for note-taking alone, and not for any other purpose.

**Food:** No eating in class. Take care of hunger/thirst before the session.



**Chatting in class:** Please refrain from distracting chatting with your neighbours, out of respect for other students and the professor. Save conversations until the class is over.

### **Campus Resources**

**Students with Disabilities:** Student with a documented disability (e.g. physical, learning, psychiatric, vision, hearing, etc.) need to arrange reasonable accommodations must contact the professor and the Access Centre for Students with Disabilities at the start of the semester. <http://supportservices.concordia.ca/disabilities>

**Student Success Centre:** To improve academic skills and learning potential (including writing skills and note-taking). <http://concordia.ca/students/success.html>

### **Weekly topics and readings (subject to change).**

#### **Week 1 – September 6, 8**

Sept. 6

Introduction to the course and syllabus. Concepts such as the body, performance, culture, race and ethnicity, will be discussed in a general sense.

Sept. 8

#### **Making Art**

Reading:

Cynthia Freeland, "Blood and Beauty," in *But Is It Art? An Introduction to Art Theory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 1-29.

#### **Week 2 - September 13, 15**

#### **The Body**

Readings:

Helen Thomas, "The Body in Culture: the Body Project" in *The Body, Dance and Cultural Theory* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), pp. 34-63.

Anthony Synnott, "Body," in *The Body Social: Symbolism, Self, and Society*. (London: New York: Routledge, 1993), pp. 7-37.

Alan Peterson, "The Body in Question: An Introduction," in *The Body in Question: A Socio-cultural Approach* (Abingdon, Oxon: New York: Routledge, 2007), pp. 1-19.

\*Monday, September 19: Academic withdrawal, with tuition refund, from two-term and fall-term courses.

#### **Week 3 - September 20, 22**

#### **Art As Experience**

Readings:

John Dewey, "The Act of Expression," in *Art as Experience* (New York: Perigree Books, 1980), p. 58-81.

Richard Shusterman, "Beneath Interpretation," *Pragmatist Aesthetics: Living Beauty, Rethinking Art* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000), p. 115-138.

Susanne Shawyer, "Occupy Newfoundland and the Dramaturgy of Endurance," *Canadian Theatre Review*, Vol. 157, Winter 2014, 7-11.

#### **Week 4 - September 27, 29**

#### **The Sensuous Body**

Readings:

Adam Gopnick, "Feel Me," *The New Yorker*, May 16, 2016

David Abram, "The Forgetting and Remembering of the Air," in *The Spell of the Sensuous: Language in a More-Than-Human World* (New York: Vintage, 1996), p. 225-260.

>>Note: Key excerpts from Pixar's *Inside Out* film will be screened in class this week. As your second response essay will be related to this animated movie, you will be required to see the rest of the film on your own.

>> Assignment: Response essay #1 due (September 29).

Subject of the essay: Awe can take people out of their own selves and into something larger, and moving them in multi-faceted ways. Write about your own experience of awe.

### **Week 5 - October 6, October 8**

#### Race and Representation

Readings:

John Lahr, "Under the Skin," *New Yorker*, 28 June 1993 (Vol. 69 Issue 19), 90-93.

Laina Dawes, "The True Colours of Zines," *Broken Pencil*, 2013, Issue 61, 14-17.

### **Week 6 - October 11, 13**

#### Cultural appropriation

Readings:

Jacqueline Shea Murphy, "Introduction," in *The People Have Never Stopped Dancing: Native American Modern Dance Histories* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), pp. 1-26.

Kathryn Prince, "Assimilating Shakespeare in the National Arts Centre's Algonquin *King Lear*," *alt.theatre*, vol. 10 no. 2, 20-23.

David Williams, "Remembering the Others That Are Us" in *The Intercultural Performance Reader*, ed. Patrice Pavis (London, New York: Routledge, 1996), pp. 67-78.

>> Assignment: Response essay #2 due (October 11). Write about Pixar's *Inside Out* film and the possibility of watching emotions becoming embodied.

\*October 11, 13: Meetings re Group Presentations (book a session with instructor during office hours prior to or after class).

### **Week 7 - October 18, 20**

#### Cultural identities

Readings:

Trinh T. Minh-ha, "A Minute Too Long" in *When the Moon Waxes Red* (New York: Routledge, 1991), pp. 107-116.

Barbara Browning (2004), "Choreographing Postcoloniality: Reflections on the passing of Edward Saïd," *Dance Research Journal*, 35/36, (2/1), 164-169.

Julien Naggar, "Rehearsing Oppression," *alt.theatre*, Vol. 10 No. 2 (Winter 2013), 20-23.

>>October 18: Submit project proposals for Group Presentation.

### **Week 8 - October 25, 27**

#### Environmental Footprints

Readings:

Lenore Metrick, "Disjunctions in Nature and Culture: Andy Goldsworthy," *Sculpture*, Vol. 22, No. 5 (June 2003), 29-33.

Laura Kenins, "Escapists and Jet Setters: Residencies and Sustainability," *C Magazine*, 119: Autumn 2013, 8-14.

Johanne Sloan, "Urban Coordinates," in *Bill Vazan: Walking Into the Vanishing Point*, (Montreal: Vox Centre Image Contemporaine, 2009), p. 85-124.

### **Week 9 - November 1, 3**

Nov. 1

#### Gender Identities

Readings:

"The Body You Want: Liz Kotz interviews Judith Butler," *Artforum*, Vol 31 No. 3 (November 1992), 82-89.

Diane Torr and Stephen Bottoms, "Drag and Self" in *Sex, Drag and Male Roles* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010), pp. 195-221.

>> Nov. 1: Submit a printed project proposal for the final paper (one to two paragraphs).

Nov. 3

Independent work study day

### **Week 10 - November 8, 10**

>> Assignment: Group presentations in class.

### **Week 11 - November 15, 17**

#### Techno bodies and extreme engagement

Reading:

Ann Cooper Albright, "Techno Bodies: Muscling with Gender in Contemporary Dance" in *Choreographing Difference: The Body and Identity in Contemporary Dance* (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1997), pp. 28-55.

### **Week 12 - November 22, 24**

#### Audience

Readings:

Adam Gopnik, "The Mindful Museum," *The Walrus*, June 4, 2007, 89.

Kate Thomas, "Ideas Under Glass," *Literary Review of Canada*, Vol. 21, No. 3, 25-27.

Alessandra Nicifero, "Occupy MOMA: The (Risks and) Potentials of a Musée de la danse," *Dance Research Journal*, Volume 46, Number 3, December 2014, pp. 32-44.

### **Week 13 - November 29, December 1**

#### Transmission & Democracy/Digital Futures

Readings:

Cynthia Freeland, "Digitizing and Disseminating", in *But Is It Art? An Introduction to Art Theory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 177-205.

Sohail Inayatullah, "Eliminating Future Shock," *Futurist.com*, Sept. 12, 2006.

>> Assignment: Final paper due (Tuesday, November 29).